



**An Roinn Sláinte**  
Department of Health

The Department of Health is seeking expressions  
of interest for appointment to the National  
Screening Committee – Ireland

**Candidate Information Pack**

**Please read carefully**

Closing Date: 15:00 on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019

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## 1. Background

### National Screening Committee - Ireland

A recommendation contained within the *'Sally Report into the CervicalCheck Screening Programme (September 2018)'* was that a National Screening Committee should be constituted to advise the Department of Health and the Minister on all new proposals for screening and revisions to current programmes.

It is against that context that the Department is now requesting expressions of interest for appointment to the National Screening Committee – Ireland.

### Role of the NSC - Ireland

The Committee will be an independent Committee responsible for considering population-based screening programmes in Ireland. In accordance with best practice and in order to ensure appropriate use of finite resources, the NSC - Ireland will:

- Effectively implement an agreed methodology for accepting applications to consider new or revisions to existing population screening programmes;
- Agree and implement a prioritisation process for the consideration of new or revised population screening programmes;
- Develop and implement a robust and transparent system to evaluate potential population-based screening programmes against a set of internationally recognised criteria;
- Clearly communicate the recommendations and the reasoning to the Department of Health, stakeholders and the public on the outcomes of their deliberations;

In performing their role it is anticipated that the NSC – Ireland will have a close working relationship with the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) and equivalent committees in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This will allow the use of research evidence, pilot programmes and economic evaluation to assess the evidence for screening programmes against a set of internationally recognised criteria. For further reference on the work of the UK NSC please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-national-screening-committee-uk-nsc>

## 2. Role and responsibilities of members

- Develop the Committee's standing as an internationally recognised body offering independent advice in the field of population health screening programmes.
- Bring relevant knowledge, skills and experience to the Committee and contribute to the provision of independent, high quality and well considered advice to the Minister for Health and the Health Service Executive.
- Communicate in a clear concise manner and have the ability to represent the views of the Committee to a range of audiences.
- Provide national leadership and ensure the NSC - Ireland achieves its objectives through implementation of the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- Observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice they provide.
- Abide by the principle of collective responsibility and stand by the recommendations of the Committee
- Be accountable for their activities and for the standard of the advice they provide.

## 3. Essential skills and criteria

To be considered, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the following qualities, skills and experience.

### 3.1 Criteria

- a) A successful and recognised career track record in any of the ranges of expertise listed in Appendix 1 Expert Roles.
- b) Ability to contribute to the Committee's analysis of complex information and data, identification of key issues and development of evidence-based solutions to complex problems.
- c) Ability to contribute to the Committee's evaluation of potentially conflicting information and opinions and ultimately producing timely, objective and informed decisions in a transparent manner
- d) Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- e) An understanding of and commitment to the principles of providing independent advice to Government, and to the principles of public life, and an ability to demonstrate impartiality and objectivity
- f) Awareness of the population screening programmes currently offered in Ireland.

## 4. Appointment

Members are appointed as individual experts to fulfill the Terms of Reference of the National Screening Committee and not as representatives of their particular professions, their employer, any organisation or any interest group.

## 5. Remuneration

Travel and subsistence expenses, which are properly and necessarily incurred in carrying out the role and responsibilities, will be reimbursed in line with travel and subsistence policy and rates applicable to the Department of Health.

## 6. Time commitment

- Between 5-7 days per year
  - Estimated 3 formal meetings of the NSC – Ireland annually
  - Estimated 3 half day training workshops on topical issues related to screening
- Secretariat to the National Screening Committee will be initially provided through the Office of the Chief Medical Officer in the Department of Health
- Members are expected to attend all meetings in person
- Members may not send representatives if they are unable to attend a meeting

## 7. Tenure

The initial appointment will be for a period of 2 years, renewable for a further 2 years up to a maximum of 4 years.

## 8. Accountability

The National Screening Committee will report to the Minister for Health through the Office of the Chief Medical Officer.

The attendance and contribution of individual members of the Committee will be subject to annual appraisal by the Chair.

## 9. Conflict of Interests

Particular attention is drawn to the requirement to declare any private interests which may, or may be perceived to, conflict with the role and responsibilities as a member of the NSC - Ireland, including any business interests and positions outside of the role as a Committee member.

If appointed, you will also be required to declare these interests on appointment which will be entered into a register operated by the NSC – Ireland and which will be made available to the public.

## 10. Standards in public life

The Committee membership will be asked to subscribe to the Standards in Public Office Commission, Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour accessible at <https://www.sipo.ie/acts-and-codes/codes-of-conduct/wider-public-service/index.xml>

The Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 and 2001 will apply to the operation of the NSC - Ireland.

## 11. Making an application

In making an application please take careful note of the following three elements as they will form the basis of the shortlisting procedure:

1. State which area of expertise under which you are applying
2. Include a supporting letter outlining how you meet each of the six criteria listed in 3.1
3. Include a brief statement (300 words max) as to what particular and special skills you can bring to the National Screening Committee

Interested parties should then submit their supporting letter, brief statement and CV as one document to [phsu@health.gov.ie](mailto:phsu@health.gov.ie) with **NSC – Ireland** in the email subject line, by 15:00 on the closing date of Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

Applications will be assessed by a selection panel chaired by Professor Niall O’Higgins, Chair of the National Screening Committee. Shortlisted candidates for each position may then be invited to interview.

### 11.1 Supporting letter

Please indicate the expert role for which you are applying (See Appendix 1 Expert Roles).

The supporting letter is your opportunity to demonstrate how you meet each of the six criteria set out in section 3.1 above. How you choose to present the information is up to you. However, you should aim to provide specific and detailed examples that demonstrate how your knowledge and experience matches each of the criteria, and which describe what your role was in achieving a specific result.

Please limit your supporting letter to two pages.

### 11.2 Brief Statement

The statement is your opportunity to demonstrate what you can bring to enhance the work of the National Screening Committee – Ireland. Please limit the statement to 300 words.

### 11.3 Declaration of interests and ensuring public confidence

If you have any business or personal interests that might be relevant to the work of the NSC – Ireland and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest were you to be appointed, please provide details in your supporting letter. Should you be successful in your application, if there is anything in your personal or professional history, that if brought into the public domain, may raise questions about a conflict of interest, please provide further details in your supporting letter. Failure to disclose such information could result in an appointment being terminated.

### 11.4 CV

Please ensure your CV includes your full name, title, home address, personal contact telephone numbers and personal email address that you are happy to be contacted on.

Include contact details for two referees who will support your application. One referee should be the person to whom you are/were accountable in your current/most recent appointment or position of employment. Please indicate the relationship of each referee to you. References will be requested for short-listed candidates prior to interview.

## 12. Indicative timetable

Closing date: 15:00 on Friday 30 August 2019

Shortlisting complete: Mid-September 2019

Interviews held: Late-September 2019

Timetable for shortlisting and interviews may change depending on the number of applications received.

## 13. Contacts

For further information regarding the role of the NSC - Ireland and the role of Committee members please contact Evette Wade, Office of the Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, Dublin;

Email: [evette\\_wade@health.gov.ie](mailto:evette_wade@health.gov.ie)

## Appendix 1 Expert Roles

The following range of expertise is currently being sought for the National Screening Committee (one for each area, with the exception of Public/Patient Voice where two members are sought):

- Public Health
- Ethics
- Public/Patient Voice (2 members sought)
- Health Economics
- Epidemiology
- Medico-Legal
- Social Scientist
- General Practice
- Paediatrics and Child Health
- Obstetrics
- Cancer
- Genetics
- Laboratory Services
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Journalism
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Pathology
- Psychology

Additional expertise may be co-opted as/when required



## Appendix 2 Applicant Checklist

1. Indicate the expert role for which you are applying
2. Supporting letter\*
3. Brief statement
4. Declaration of interest
5. CV

\*Not required for public/patient voice